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T H E  
*Christian Worshipper of GOD,*

*Supported and encouraged, under the most invincible*  
REFLECTIONS *that can be thrown*  
*upon him.*

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I N A  
DISCOURSE  
O N  
A C T S xxiv. 14.

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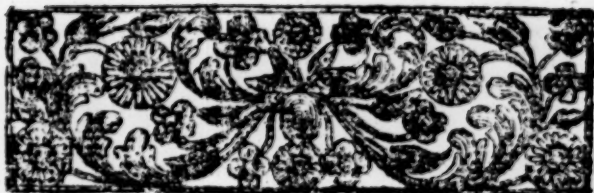
By JOHN TREN. *K*

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## A C T S XXIV. 14.

*But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call Heresy, so Worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all Things which are written in the Law, and the Prophets,*



**E X T** to our Blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, the great *Author* and *Finisher* of the Gospel Faith, the most troublesome Eye-sore to the *Jewish* Priests and Elders, was the great Apostle to the Gentiles, *St. Paul*; on account of his strenuously asserting, and vigorously defending our *Christian Liberty* from the burthensome Rites and Ceremonies of the *Mosaic Law*. So strangely bigotted were the *Jewish* Nation to the Temple Worship and Service, so highly did they value themselves thereupon, and so great were their Expectations of Happiness from their Communion in it, that they were immediately fir'd on the least slight of, or Objection against it, and pursued with the utmost Ma-

lice, Rage, and Revenge, those who turned their Backs on it, or endeavour'd to depreciate it. This was the Foundation of all their Fury against our Apostle. They could not bear to hear him go up and down preaching to the Gentile Converts the Needlefiness of their submitting to Circumcision, and that the Observance of the legal Ceremonies was not necessary to Salvation. Hence it was they rais'd the Mob against him, insulted him, accus'd him before the Magistrate, and unsheath'd the Civil Sword against him whenever they could; but they could not obtain their Ends against him, could neither stop his Mouth nor take away his Life. Upon his Arrival at *Jerusalem*, in Complaisance to *James* and others, and in order, if possible, to take off the Odium rais'd against him, by the *Jewish* Zealots, he goes into the Temple to purify himself, and offer Offerings with some others of his Friends, according to the Law. Being discover'd by some, who had seen and heard him elsewhere, the Populace were presently halloo'd, and a general Insurrection made, in order to murder him. But being rescued by the *Roman* Commander, he was reserv'd for a formal Trial before the Governor *Paltix*; where we find him standing with his Accusers at the Beginning of this xxivth. Chapter. The Counsel employ'd against him was one *Tertullus*, a Man of considerable Note and Figure, a florid  
 Stile,

Stile, and insinuating Address, as we may see, *ver.* 2. 3. 4. The Crimes charg'd upon the Apostle by general Approbation, were no less than Sedition, Heresy, and flagrant Impiety. They represented him as an universal Nuisance and Plague; as one that endeavour'd to undermine and overturn both Church and State, wherever he came, *ver.* 5. 6. A Charge! which could it have been made good, would have vindicated all their violent Proceedings against him, had they been much more so; but it was as false as it was black; and in the Refutation of it, *St. Paul* never shew'd himself, nor could any Man shew himself possibly, more the *Gentleman*, the *Scholar*, and the *Christian*. No Interruption did he give his Accuser; no indecent Forwardness did he shew to defend himself; but when permitted, how calm and modest his Reply! how engaging his Manner of Application! how plain, and yet how full his Answer! how cheerful, frank, and courageous (the usual Consequence of Innocence and Uprightness) doth he appear! *ver.* 10. 11. 12. 13. *q. d.* *Felix*, during the Course of thy Administration, thou hast had frequent Opportunities of acquainting thyself with the *Jewish* Manners and Customs, and canst be no Stranger to the Dispositions and Tempers of my Countrymen. Thou art not unskill'd in our Law, nor needest to be informed, what strange and violent Bigots this Nation

Nation is to their Tenets and Notions; and therefore art not in Danger of being impos'd upon, as one newly come to the Government might be. The Knowledge of this encourageth me to speak, and emboldeneth me to expect Justice at thine Hands. It is but twelve Days ago since I came to *Jerusalem*. Six of which I have been confined also. My Design in coming was religious, *viz.* to bring Alms to my Nation, and to worship God at the Feast of *Pentecost* according to Commandment. My Behaviour in the City and Temple, and their other Places of Worship was becoming this pious Design. I never attempted to inflame the Spirits of any, neither have I had any Controversy, as to religious Matters, with any Man since my Arrival; but the whole of my Behaviour hath been quiet and peaceable. Whatever therefore hath been alledged against me, is entirely groundless, and I challenge them to the Proof of it. But lest thou shouldest be surpriz'd at their Conduct, as not being able to unravel the Mystery of their appearing thus ragingly and furiously against me, I must and will inform thee that, though the God I worship, be the same God they worship, and the God of both our Forefathers; though there is not a Word written in the Law and the Prophets, which they profess so much Zeal for, but what I believe to be of Divine Authority, yet the Way and Manner of my worshipping  
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this God is disagreeable to them, Being somewhat different from theirs; and therefore in order to discourage and discountenance it, they give it a Name of Reproach and Scandal, and call it Heresy. Hence all this Noise and Clamour, these Slanders and Accusations against me. *But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call Heresy, so worship I the God of my Fathers, believing all Things, which are written in the Law and the Prophets.* The Proposition I shall advance as the Subject of my Discourse from these Words, is,

Whosoever worshipping the eternal God, according to the Scripture Revelation, though he may be represented under the Scandalous Denomination of an Heretick, need not be ashamed nor afraid to confess and own it to any Man, of whatever Religion, or in whatever Station of Life he is.

*This I confess*, I freely own, and openly avow, without Blushing or Dread, *to thee, Felix*, whom I know to be a Worshipper of other Gods. though thou art the Supreme Ruler of this Nation, and now sittest in Judgment upon my self, *that after the Way*, according to that Manner, Institution, and Rule, *which they call Heresy*, which this my Accuser, and these Priests and Elders give no better a Name to, than Heresy, *So worship I the God of my Fathers*, the same God, whom all my Fathers before me worshipped; whom those good and great  
Men,

Men, the Prophets and Patriarchs revered and adored; who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, *believing all Things which are written in the Law and the Prophets*, herein am I directed, guided, and governed by that Revelation, which God hath made of himself and his Will by *Moses* in the Law, and by the Prophets in their Writings, which is the Object of my Faith, and which I take as the only Rule of my religious Practice.

In the Prosecution of this Argument I shall use this Method.

*First.* I shall enquire what it is to worship God according to the Scripture Revelation.

*Secondly.* What is contained under the Denomination of an Heretick which the Worshipper of the eternal God according to the Scripture Revelation, may be scandalously represented to be.

*Thirdly.* Why such an one, tho' thus scandalously represented, need not be ashamed nor afraid to confess and own it to any Man, of whatever Religion, or in whatever Station of Life he is.

*Fourthly.* I shall conclude with some suitable Reflections.

*First.* The first Enquiry is, What is it to worship God according to the *Scripture Revelation*?

To worship God according to the Scripture Revelation in the General is to be determined in

in all our Addresses to the Supreme Being, both as to the Way and Manner, and Circumstances of them, by those Directions and Precepts, which God hath given us in his written Word; to take our Bibles, as being an infallible Record of Divine Truth, for our alone Guide, and to adore and serve our Maker as we are there instructed to do, without any the least Deviation.

Particularly,

*First.* To worship God according to the Scripture Revelation, is to worship him singly and alone; to admit none into Competition or Rivalship with him in our Worship. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his Name; ye shall not go after other Gods, of the Gods of the People which are round about you.* Deut. vi. 13. *Then saith Jesus unto him, get thee hence Satan; for it is written thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* Matt. iv. 10.

Divine Worship is founded on the adorable Excellencies of the Divine Nature; God being possessed of all possible Perfections in the highest Manner and Degree. It necessarily results also from the infinite Obligations we lye under to him; having receiv'd our very Beings from his Power and Goodness, and depending on him every Moment for the Con-

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tinuance of Life, and every Mercy we enjoy. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, Honour, and Power; for thou hast created all Things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created.* Rev. iv. 11.

Forasmuch now as God is the sole Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the Universe; needed no Help nor Assistance from any other, in the Formation of the World at first; nor wants any in his providential Care of all those Things, which his Almighty Hand did frame; forasmuch as there is none in the Heavens to be likened unto him, nor any among the Sons of the Mighty to be compar'd with him, God is the only fit and proper Object of religious Worship, and he alone should be worshipped by us. This he claims as his Prerogative, and so jealous is he of his Honour, that he will not part with this his Glory to any other, and hath threatned severely to punish those, who offer to put any on a Par with him in this Respect. *I am the Lord, that is my Name, and my Glory will I not give to another, neither my Praise to graven Images* Isaiah xlii. 8. *Thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord, whose Name is jealous, is a jealous God.* Exod. xxxv. 14. Whosoever therefore hath other Gods before him, or maketh unto himself any graven Image, or any Likeness of any Thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the Earth beneath, or that is in the Water under

under the Earth, and boweth down himself to them and serveth them, acts contrary to the Will of God, and his Worship is anti-scriptural.

*Secondly.* To worship God according to the Scripture Revelation is to worship him in and by *Christ Jesus*; the only Mediator between God and Man. *Though there be that are called Gods, whether in Heaven or in Earth, (as there be Gods many, and Lords many) but to us there is but one God the Father; of whom are all Things and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all Things, and we by him. 1. Cor. viii. 5. Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; No Man cometh unto the Father but by me. John xiv. 6. Whatsoever ye do in Word or Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving Thanks to God and the Father by him. Col. iii. 17.* Mankind by their Sin and Apostacy from God, justly forfeited the Divine Favour, and incurr'd his righteous Anger and Displeasure; so that he might for ever have banish'd them from his Presence, and permitted not the least Communion between him and them.

They had also so corrupted and defiled themselves by their Lusts; had rendered themselves so unlike the Purity of the Divine Nature; had made themselves so abominable in his Eyes, that they could not but blush, and be afraid to approach him in any act of Worship in their own Names, lest he should frown

upon them in Wrath, and reject all their Services at their Hands.

God in Mercy and abundant Goodness contriv'd a Method to Salve his Honour, and give them Encouragement. He graciously sent his own eternal Son into the World; laid on him the Iniquities of us all; made his Soul a Sacrifice for Sin; accepted of the Atonement, and advanc'd him to his own Right Hand, as a Mediator and Intercessor for us; and *bath set him forth as a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness, for the Remission of Sins that are past, thro' the Forbearance of God; that he might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* Rom. iii. 25. *And we seeing that we have so great an High-Priest, that is pass'd into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, may come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy, and find Grace to help in Time of Need.* Heb. iv. 14, 16.

These Doubts and Fears of the Divine Acceptance, that must necessarily arise from the Knowledge of the Divine Holiness and Justice, and a Consciousness of our own Unworthiness and Guilt, are by this Scheme of Grace remov'd; and having so great and powerful an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, we may draw near to God in full Assurance of Faith, and present our Petitions and Services before him, in Hope and Confidence of being heard and accepted of him.

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To address the Eternal God in our own Names; to rely merely on the Mercy of God, and the Sincerity of our own Hearts and Ways for Acceptance; to come before him as an absolute, uncovenanting God, as it naturally tends to damp our Spirits, and fill our Minds with Fear, so is it directly contrary to the Scripture Revelation; which grounds *all the Boldness and Access with Confidence to God on the Faith of Jesus.* Eph. iii. 12.

To make Use of, or place any Trust in, the Merit and Mediation of any other besides Christ, whether Saint or Angel, how holy or exalted soever, is a way of Worship equally antiscritptural; for as there is *but one God, so there is but one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for all.* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Thirdly. To Worship God according to the Scripture Revelation, is to Worship him in Spirit and in Truth. *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and Truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.* John iv. 23. 24.

In Divine Worship, if we follow the Directions of Scripture, all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls, must be engaged, and we must draw nigh to God with our *Hearts and Spirits.*

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Our *Reason* and *Understanding*, must bear a Part in the Service we pay to God. As *reasonable* Creatures, 'tis necessary, that we have a proper *Knowledge* of the *Nature* and *Perfections* of that Being we address ourselves unto; that we understand the *Meaning*, *Design*, and *End* of that Service we pay unto him. It is the highest *Reflection* possible on the *Christian* Worship, to make it an *unreasonable* Service, as tho' we were not to know what we did, when we worshipped the Supreme Being. This would be opening a Gate for all Manner of *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm* to enter in, and is therefore expressly condemned by our Lord. John iv. 22. *Ye Worship ye know not what : We know what we Worship, for Salvation is of the Jews.*

Our *Wills* also must be engag'd. The Worship of God, according to Scripture, must be without Grudging, and Constraint. Our *Affections* neither must be wanting; which, tho' they are but indifferent Guides (because if followed blindly, they are apt to lead us into wild and indecent Extravagancies) yet, are of very great Use and Service to quicken and encourage us against Temptation, and in Spite of Opposition, if wisely kept under, and duly made to follow the Direction and Government of our Reason and Judgment. *Not slothful in Business, fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord.* Rom. xii. 11.

SINCERITY

SINCERITY and UPRIGHTNESS, is a necessary Ingredient of the *Divine Worship*, if perform'd agreeably to Scripture Direction. God desireth Truth in the inward Parts. Ps. li. 4. And is nigh unto all that call upon him in Truth. Ps. cxv. 18. Our Acts of Worship must be perform'd in Obedience to the *Divine Command*; must flow from a Sense of our Duty and Obligations to him, and be design'd as a means, whereby the Name of our God may be glorified in the World, and our Souls attain the Enjoyment of him. Whensoever any base, worldly Ends, insinuate themselves into the Worship of God, and we design thereby more our Temporal Interest, than his Honour and Glory, whom we profess to worship, so far we go against Scripture; It is only a Mockery of God, mere Hypocrisy, and will be resented accordingly.

To the worshipping God thus in Spirit and Truth, the Scripture teacheth us, that the Aids and Assistance of the *Divine Spirit* are necessary. For through Christ we have an Access by one Spirit unto the Father. Eph. ii. 18. By him we are fitted, and prepared for, and assisted in, the Worship of God, so as to perform it in a right and acceptable Manner. The Spirit helpeth our Infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for, as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh Intercession for us, with Groanings which cannot be uttered. Rom. viii. 26.

A Worshipper of God, that doth not see any Need of, or consequently doth not seek after, nor is thankful for, the Help and Strength of the Holy Spirit of God, in his worship of the Deity, appears to me, not to worship God according to the Scripture Revelation.

*Fourthly.* To worship God according to the Scripture Revelation, is to worship him in the *Beauties of Holiness*; with clean Hands, and a pure Heart; unpolluted, undefiled, with the Stain and Guilt of any one known Sin indulged and reigning. This would be an effectual Bar in the way of God's Acceptance; and prove the ready Means of drawing down the Divine Indignation and Vengeance. God heareth not Sinners. *The Sacrifice of the Wicked is an Abomination to the Lord, how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked Mind.* Prov. xxi, 27.

We are to wash our Hands in Innocency, and to compass the Altar of our God, and draw near with a true Heart, in full Assurance of Faith, having our Hearts sprinkled from an evil Conscience, and our Bodies washed with pure Water. Heb. x. 22.

*Fifthly.* To worship God according to the Scripture Revelation is to worship him in the Faith and Hope of a blessed Resurrection to eternal Life.

Time hath been when such a Service would have been deemed mercenary, and judg'd unworthy

worthy a Christian, but the World seems to have been grown more wise at this Day, than to condemn what is so very agreeable to the Gospel Scheme. All the Promises of Christianity were designed, and are urged as so many Motives to Holy Obedience. To do the Will of God on such Encouragement, is truly Evangelical. The Patriarchs, and Prophets, and Martyrs of the Old Testament Dispensation, obey'd God under a strong and lively Faith of the invisible Realities of the eternal World, whose Examples are at large proposed to us for our Imitation. *Heb. xi.* The blessed Jesus himself gave us a Pattern hereof to copy after, *who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God. Heb. xii. 2.* And that our Apostle acted on this Principle, we learn from the Words following my Text, and *have Hope towards God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a Resurrection of the Dead, both of the just and the unjust; and herein do I exercise myself, to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men,*

I proceed,

*Secondly.* To enquire what is contained under the Denomination of an Heretic, which the Worshipper of the eternal God, accord-

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ing to the Scripture Revelation, may be scandalously represented to be.

There have been no Words more common in the Mouths of Christians of late Years, than Heresy and Heretic. All Parties scruple not to fasten that Term on those of opposite Sentiments to themselves; and this they do by way of Scandal and Reproach: And it is certain, it doth carry a most harsh and odious Sound to modern Ears. Call a Man an Heretic, and the common People immediately entertain an Idea of him, as one abandon'd of God, and in a State of Damnation: And very often the most loose and profligate Wretch, shall find more Room in their Charity, than one whom they have been taught to look upon in that Light. This I believe you must all perceive to have been Matter of Fact. But it is justly to be question'd, whether the greatest Part of those, who have those Words oftenest in their Mouths, are acquainted with the Meaning of them. I shall endeavour to let you see, in as plain a manner as I am able, what was the original and primitive Sense of Heresy and Heretic, and what they have been us'd to signify in the present and some past Ages.

The Greek Word, is deriv'd from a Theme which signifies to choose, and therefore properly denotes a Set of Notions and Principles,

Principles, which a Person embraceth, in order to form his Life and Manners by them. Hence it appears at first Sight, that it may be taken in a good or bad Sense, as those chosen Notions or Principles, prove to be good or bad; and thus was it used both by Latin and Greek Authors, and even in the New Testament itself, to mean no more than a System of Tenets and Opinions, that a particular Man or Party, hath chosen and professeth to believe, and to govern his Conduct by. Thus CICERO, *Non sum in eadem cum illo Hæresi. i. e. Sententia.* Tull. Paradox. I am not in the same Heresy with him, that is, in the same way of Thinking. Thus Josephus calls the different Sects of the Jews Heresies; as, the Heresy of the *Essenes*; the Heresy of the Pharisees, &c. Thus doth St. Luke himself use the Word in this Book, as signifying only the peculiar Sentiments of a particular Party. *Acts v. 17. Then the High-Priest rose up, and all they that were with him, which is the Sect of the Sadduces.* (Or as the Original hath it, the Heresy of the Sadduces.) *Acts. xv. 5. There rose up certain of the Sect of the Pharisees, which believed.* In the Greek it is, the Heresy of the Pharisees, *xxvi. 5. which knew me from the Beginning, that after the most straitest Sect of our Religion:* Or as the Greek hath it, the most straitest Heresy of our Religion, *I lived a Pharisee.*

cap. xxviii. 22. *As concerning this Sect, or Heresy, we know that every where it is spoken against.* In all these Places, the Word seems plainly to be used in an indifferent Sense; and therefore our Translators do not render it Heresy but Sect.

But there are other Places of Scripture, in which the Word plainly carries a bad Sense with it; and therefore is translated in our Bibles Heresy. As, 1 Cor. xi. 19. *For there must be also Heresies among you, that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you.* Gal. v. 20. *Among the Works of the Flesh, are reckoned Heresies.* 2 Pet. ii. 1. *There were false Prophets among the People, as there shall be false Teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable Heresies.* Tit. iii. 10. *A Man that is an Heretic, after the first and second Admonition, reject, knowing that he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.*

Christian Authors, in every succeeding Age of Christianity, never use the Word but in a bad Sense; in which it is used at this Day.

According to the present Acceptation of the Word, *Heresy*, may be defined to be, *An Error in Doctrine, that subverts the Foundations of the Christian Religion, obstinately maintain'd and persisted in, notwithstanding the clearest Arguments and Proofs to the contrary.* This, I take

take it, is what we commonly mean by the Word now a-Days. Consequently, an *Heretick* is one that *is mistaken in the Fundamentals of Christianity; wilfully shuts his Eyes against the Light, and continueth Deaf to all Convictions.*

There are therefore these three Things particularly contain'd under the Denomination of an Heretic.

*First.* He is one that errs in Doctrine; whose Faith in the Christian Scheme is not right and sound. A Man is never call'd an Heretic for any Faults in Practice, let his Life be ever so vicious and immoral. He only is so denominated, that holds erroneous Opinions and Principles, differing from the Truths supposed to be revealed in Scripture.

*Secondly.* He is one, whose Sentiments disagree with the Scripture Doctrine, in Points of the utmost *Moment* and last *Importance*; such as affect the very Essence of our Religion; without the Belief of which Salvation is judged unattainable. It is not holding barely a Doctrinal Error, that constitutes a Man an Heretic. No! There are Mistakes of an indifferent Nature, or of but small Consequence in Religion, adjudged such by all Parties, which therefore a Man may fall into, and yet be esteemed

esteemed sound and orthodox in the Main. But then there are Mistakes destructive and fatal, which undermine the whole Superstructure of our Religion, and pull the Fabrick of Christianity down to the Ground. Such as the Disbelief and Denial of the Resurrection particularly mentioned by the Apostle, which he argues and proves to be subversive of the Gospel. 1. Cor. xv. 13. *If there be no Resurrection of the Dead, then is Christ not risen, and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your Faith is also vain; ye are yet in your Sins, and they also which are fallen asleep in Christ, are perished.* And other Doctrines of a like Nature there are, Errors in which will prove fatal, and it is in Relation to these, that the erroneous Person is denominated an Heretic.

*Thirdly.* Inveterate Prejudice and Obstinacy goes also to compleat the Idea of an Heretic. He is one that is resolved not to see his Error; will not be better inform'd; all Admonitions, Persuasions and Arguments are lost upon him. He will not attend and hearken to them, but remains stubborn and refractory, wilfully blind and obstinate. Hence that noted saying of *St. Austin, Errare possum, Hereticus esse Nolo.* Err I may, an Heretic I won't be; *i. e.* I will not be obstinate in my Error; I will be ever open to Conviction; always willing and  
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ready to receive new Light, whensoever offer'd.

Such is the Constitution of an Heretick. But such an one no sincerely pious and good Man can be. *For whosoever will do God's Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* John vii. 17. *What Man is he that feareth the Lord? him shall he teach in the Way that he shall choose.* Psalm xxv. 12. But yet such a scandalous Denomination hath been the Fate of many a good Christian. According to the Temper and Disposition of those in Power in the Church, hath been, and will be the Term Heresy and Heretic more or less thrown about and applied. Where Persons are fond of multiplying Fundamentals, and can so far prevail with the Civil Power, as to get them establish'd by Authority, the least Deviation from the generally receiv'd Opinions shall be construed Heresy, and the Man condemned for an Heretic, who is a sincere Enquirer after Truth, and taketh all due Care and Pains to inform his Judgment aright out of the Word of God, which he believes from his Heart, and taketh for the only Rule of his Faith and Manners; such an one, I say, shall be condemn'd as an Heretic, because he cannot be convinc'd by such Arguments offer'd to him, as they think good and clear, but to him appear the contrary.

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Hence it is we find the *Papists*, whose Religion is established in *Spain, France, &c.* authoritatively pronouncing of all those who deny their superstitious and idolatrous Practices, that they are Heretics, and condemning all *Protestants* as obstinately erroneous because they cannot, (as it would be a Wonder if they should) see the Force of those weak Proofs which they offer for their Practices. Hence it is *Lutherans* bestow most plentifully this Denomination on the *Calvinists*; and they return it with equal Warmth on them. And hence arose the so plentiful Use of this Term in some Time past nearer Home; when a Person could not be a Dissenter from High-Church Principles, without having that odious Appellation fix'd upon him. Such a Temper in all Ages and in all Churches hath produc'd the same Effect, since the Time that the *Jewish* High-Priest and Elders first appropriated the Name to Christianity, and stiled it the Heresy of the *Nazarenes*. But a good Man that worshippeth the eternal God according to the Scripture Revelation needs not regard and value such Usage. This brings me to the third Enquiry, *viz.*

*Thirdly.* Why such an one, tho' thus scandalously represented needs not be ashamed nor afraid, to confess and own it to any Man, of whatever Religion, or in whatever Station of Life he is. And *First.*

*First.* His way of worshipping God founded on the Scripture Revelation, will stand the Test of Reason, and bear the strictest Examination and Enquiry.

Did our Bibles contain any Thing unreasonable, that was enjoyned in the Worship and Service of God; could we see any Absurdity as to the way and Manner commanded; no wonder if Christian Professors were upon the Reserve, and backward to publish it to the World, lest Men of good Understanding and Judgment should see into the Weakness and Vanity of it, and expose them for their Belief and Practice of it. An Unreasonable Belief, and an Unreasonable Conduct will always damp the Resolution and Courage of any Man that embraceth it. But when we can see the clearest and the strongest Reason for what we believe, and what we do, where can there be room for Shame or Fear? The Christian Service is a reasonable Service, most worthy of God to institute, and becoming such a Creature as Man to perform. Let the Word know, that we do, (and let any impartial Man judge, whether we do not act a most reasonable Part in doing it) worship the one only Infinite and Supreme Cause of all Things, and him alone. Let Men know we worship this eternal God in and thro' the Mediation

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of his only begotten and well beloved Son *Christ Jesus*. Let them know we profess to worship him in Spirit and Truth; in the Beauties of Holiness; in the Faith and Hope of a blessed Resurrection. Let them set all their Wits to work to discover any the least Inconsistency herein. Let them consult their Reason and see whether there be any Thing in all this, beneath the Dignity of our rational Nature. We need desire no Favour or Affection. All we want is a just and impartial Hearing. Let them compare this way of worshipping God with that which any other Religion in the World dictates, and they will soon see the Difference in Point of reasonableness between them, Let the *Heathen, Turk, and Jew*, be ashamed or afraid to have their way of Worship scrutiniz'd and sifted: The *Christian* should be ready always to give an Answer to every Man that asketh him a Reason of his Worship of God; as there are infinitely strong Reasons always ready at Hand for him to give.

*Secondly.* God will maintain his own Cause and support him in the Defence of it.

The Scripture Revelation, is of Divine Authority, and contains the Mind and Will

of God in all Things that relate to his Worship and Service. Whilst we are engag'd in any Work imposed on us there, it is the Cause of God we are engaged in, and he is bound in Honour and Justice to himself, not to suffer his own Cause to fall to the Ground.

In order to encourage his Disciples to go forth and propagate the Gospel at first, in Spite of all Opposition, he assureth them of Wisdom and Strength from Above, to enable them to the Work. *Matt. x. 17. 18. Beware of Men, for they will deliver you up to the Councils, and they will scourge you in their Synagogues, and ye shall be brought before Governors and Kings for my sake, for a Testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no Thought how or what ye shall speak, for it shall be given you in that same Hour what ye shall speak; for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.* And when we consider the Conduct and Behaviour of the Apostles, in the Condition here foretold, we must needs see the Promise exactly and fully made good: For such Wisdom and Courage were they possess'd of, as all their Adversaries could not gain-say, but wonder'd at. It is true, this Assurance was

more especially given unto them, as they stood in more especial Need of supernatural Aid for the Work they were employ'd in; and therefore it cannot be given to any private Christian at this Day, without a manifest straining of the words: However, from hence we may argue, that God will take Care, as *Our Day is, our Strength shall be.* And we do in Reality find, that in after-Ages, when God did call any out to extraordinary Trials and Work, his Grace was proportional and sufficient for them: His Strength was made perfect in Weakness.

*Thirdly.* Whatever such an one suffers for his adhering to the Worship of God according to the Scripture Revelation on Earth, *great will be his Reward in Heaven.* None ever was, or ever will be a Loser for it in the End. What! tho' he should undergo on that Account, thro' the Ignorance and Malice of a wicked World, the Loss of Reputation, or Estate; tho' he should be made a Gazing-Stock, both by Reproaches and Afflictions; should have Trial of cruel Mockings and Scourgings; yea, moreover of Bonds and Imprisonment, and Death itself; the Sight and Enjoyment of God Above, which he hath a certain Promise of, will

will make ample Amends for all, and he will never have Cause to repent his enduring any Hardship here below, for the Sake of it. This was the Encouragement Christ gives his Disciples. *Matt. x. 32. Whosoever will confess me before Men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in Heaven; but whosoever shall deny me before Men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* The same Argument do we find this our Apostle using. *2 Tim. ii. 11. It is a faithful Saying, for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.*

Having such an encouraging Promise, such a comfortable Assurance of so great an Happiness consequent on confessing and owning his scriptural Worship of God, who need be asham'd or can be afraid so to do? Let Men despise me and load me with ever so many hard Names and Reproaches for confessing my Faith and religious Practice before them, as long as I can cast mine Eyes to Heaven, and behold the blessed Jesus willing and ready to introduce me into his Father's Presence, on my Departure hence, and thus welcoming me there, See, O Righteous Father, the Soul that for mine  
and

*and the Gospel sake, and the Acknowledgment of the Truth, did not start back from the severest Sufferings, in his Reputation, Person, and Estate ; I now recommend him as an Object meet for thy Grace and Favour, Let him sit down with me in my Throne, as I am, in Reward of my Sufferings, set down with thee on thy Throne. I will rejoice and be exceedingly glad, how grievous soever my present Lot is.*

Hence, to conclude

*First.* Observe the proper and genuine Character of a true and sound Christian.

Were we to seek among the Professors of the Gospel for a just and full Description of a true Christian, we should find a greater Difference than at first we might be aware of. Every distinct Party would be for confining the true Christian Character too much to the Belief and Practice of their own particular Scheme, and for inserting such Things as essential to it, which should exclude those of different Sentiments from having an Interest in it. Unless they believ'd as they believ'd, and did as they did in Religion, in their Account, they are not true and sound Christians. But alas! my Brethren, this Game hath been too long plaid for the Honour and Credit of Christianity, and the Peace  
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and Welfare of the Church. We should throw off now, it is high Time, such unreasonable Attachment to any System or Set of Notions, framed by the Ingenuity and Learning of any Man; and judge of our Religion and the Goodness of the Professors of it, from the Accounts and Characters of them, which we find in our Bibles. I am sure our Judgments both of the one and the other, would be more just and right, and I am persuaded we should soon find the Benefit and Comfort of it. *St. Paul* was without Doubt a true Christian, and his Confession of Faith, sound and orthodox, and he gives it as his Character, that after the way they call'd Heresy, so worshipp'd he the God of his Fathers, believing all Things that were written in the Law and the Prophets. Therefore whoever acts the same Part, and worshippeth the eternal God according to the Gospel, and believeth the Old Testament *Revelation*, is a Christian, and a true Christian too, whatever his Sentiments may be, as to some particular Points of Controversy, bandied about by Men of different Persuasions and Parties; we should not be backward to acknowledge, receive, and love him as a Christian Brother, though the over-warm Zeal of some may carry them to hard Sentiments and Speeches of him.

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*Secondly.* Let us learn hence not to be terrified and affrighted from confessing and owning our worshipping the eternal God according to the *Scripture Revelation*, on account of any odious Names thrown upon us for so doing.

It is an Old Device of Satan's; a Thing his Emissaries have practised from the Beginning, against the Gospel of Christ. *St. Paul*, in his Day, was reckoned an *Arch-Heretic*, a *Ringleader* of the Heresy of the *Nazarenes*; and a great many good Men of the same Temper and Spirit with *St. Paul*, have met with the like Usage. Why then should any of us think it strange to find our Characters thus injuriously loaded with Scandal and Odium? The Devil hath the same Antipathy against the *Christian Revelation* still. Time hath made no Alteration in his malicious Temper; and he never wants for Instruments to discourage the sincere Professors of it. Let us be but once assured in our own Minds and Consciences, that we worship God according to the Gospel way, believing all Things that are written in the Law and the Prophets, and then we may challenge the World and Devil to do their worst; remembering those words of our Saviour. *Matt. v. 7. Blessed are ye when*

*when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all Manner of Evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

*Thirdly.* What a Spirit, unworthy the Christian Name, do those shew who are asham'd or afraid to confess they Worship God according to the Scripture Revelation, on any Consideration whatsoever?

Do they not think the Christian Service a reasonable Service? Why then do they engage in it? And if it be reasonable, why are they asham'd of it? Cannot it be defended with sound Reason and solid Argument? and stand the Brunt of the strictest Enquiry and Examination? Is it not the Cause of God they espouse? why are they then afraid? Let their Enemies be ever so many and powerful, is not God above  
E all?

all? Cannot the Almighty, who doth whatever he pleaseth in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of this Earth, cannot he maintain it? Is he not able to support them, whatever their Burthen is in owning of it? Hath he not promised them a sufficient Reward hereafter, for all their Sufferings on that Account? Will not Heaven at last compensate for all the Troubles they can endure? It is a Disgrace to the Christian Faith, that any Professor of it, should be thus timorous and cowardly.

St. Paul's Circumstances at this Time, were very low and mean. He was a Prisoner, accused of the highest Crimes and Misdemeanours, by all the Great Men of his own Nation, before a Judge that was an Heathen, unjust, intemperate, and exceeding covetous, yet all these Considerations, could not dismay and daunt him. He speaks his religious Sentiments with the greatest Courage and Frankness, let the Event  
be

be what it would. *This I confess to thee,  
that after the Way which they call Heresy,  
so worship I the God of my Fathers, believ-  
ing all Things which are written in the Law  
and the Prophets.*

F I N I S.



( 22 )

Be sure to write in your  
journal the date and place  
of each observation. Also  
the name of the person with  
whom you are staying.

1881

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